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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

O gracious God, from whom all blessings flow and from whom comes every good gift, we are indebted to You for our hopes, our dreams, our faith. On this day we are specially thankful for all those people who use their abilities to alleviate the conflicts between nations or individuals, who work to ease estrangement between the nations and who bring serenity and a peace to others. Our prayer is to repeat the truth that peacemakers are blessed, that those who encourage reconciliation are honored among us, and that those who seek peace will be blessed, for it is in giving to others that we receive Your bountiful gifts of peace in our own hearts. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. BROWN] come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will recognize 10 Members on each side for 1-minute speeches.

SAVE MEDICARE

(Mr. LARGENT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LARGENT. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago, the Medicare Trustees, a bipartisan group appointed by both Republican and Democrat administrations, confirmed to Members of the House of Representatives that unless substantial reforms are made, Medicare will go bankrupt in just 7 years.

To reemphasize—if no action is taken to reform Medicare, and spending continues to increase at the current rate, Medicare will go bankrupt by the year 2002.

This is why we have been working in the House to develop proposals to preserve and protect Medicare. During this work the first and foremost concern is to ensure that Medicare patients receive quality, affordable, and easily accessible health care.

After studying the problem, we learned that preserving the financial stability of the Medicare system can be achieved by doing two things.

First, we must simplify the Medicare system—we must cut out burdensome paperwork and redtape. By private industry standards, the program today is an outdated, Government-run bureaucracy.

We must open up more opportunities within Medicare for seniors to have access to the same type of voluntary offerings available in the private sector.

Second, we must aggressively go after waste, fraud, and abuse that exists in the Medicare system. Ten percent or \$16 billion of the Medicare budget is spent on fraudulent and abusive claims each year.

Critics are already claiming that this reform is a cut in the Medicare Program. This is simply not true. By enacting these modest reforms, Medicare will continue to increase—but at a slower rate.

In fact, costs per beneficiary will continue to increase from \$4,800 per participant in 1995, to \$6,400 per recipient in 2002. How is that a cut?

To play politics with this issue does not help in finding a solution to this problem. To do nothing is totally irresponsible, and unacceptable, as it will result in the Medicare system going bankrupt in 7 years.

Our commitment is to simplify Medicare in order to save Medicare—it is just that simple.

HISTORY OF MEDICARE

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago this month on July 30, 1965, President Lyndon Johnson in Independence, MO, signed the legislation creating Medicare. Earlier that year, 93 percent of House Republicans, including then-Congressman BOB DOLE from Kansas, opposed the creation of Medicare as we know it. Let me repeat that: 93 percent of Republican Members of the House of Representatives in 1965 opposed the creation of Medicare.

In the 1970's and the 1980's the far right of the Republican Party continued to try to make cuts in Medicare and dismantle that program. Today, in 1995, the mainstream part of the Republican Party, Republican leadership, again wants to dismantle Medicare and end the program as we know it.

They were wrong in 1965 when 93 percent of Republicans opposed Medicare. They were wrong in the 1970's and 1980's when the far right wing of the Republican Party wanted to cut Medicare, and they are wrong today to give tax breaks to the wealthy to the tune

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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